DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 426 165 UD 032 720

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TITLE	Carnegie Corporation's Youth Intergroup Relations Initiative. Report of a Meeting Convened by Carnegie Corporation of New York (New York, NY, October 15-17, 1997).
INSTITUTION	Carnegie Corp. of New York, NY.
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	39p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Conflict Resolution; Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; *Equal Education; Grants; Intergroup Education; *Intergroup Relations; Multicultural Education; *School Role; Social Change; Teacher Education; *Teacher Role; *Track System (Education)
IDENTIFIERS	Carnegie Corporation of New York

ABSTRACT

The Carnegie Corporation's initiative, established in 1996 to create a "new generation of tolerance," included grants to 16 institutions for cutting-edge research in various social science disciplines. Some themes are presented from the second meeting of project leaders for these research efforts. Most of the themes relate to the roles of schools and teachers. Changes in U.S. society mean that schools, communities, and even families are more diverse than they were decades ago. In spite of the new diversity, there remains a sort of "conspiracy of silence" surrounding issues of race. A national dialog about race is as necessary in the schools as in the larger society, since schools have enormous potential as the locus for improving intergroup relations. Current research supports the value of multicultural and antiracist teaching and the importance of cooperative activities in building positive race relations. Because schools play an important role in communicating values, the practice of tracking must be examined in light of the effects on student self-esteem and the limited opportunities for intergroup interaction that research suggests it provides. Teachers generally have little experience in fostering positive intergroup relations, and for this reason, they need skills in conflict management and sensitivity training. Like teachers, parents have great potential to influence their children in learning tolerance, and efforts to support parents in this task must be encouraged. Other themes discussed were the importance of media as an agent for social change, some international approaches to the study of intergroup relations, the possibility of integrative work between researchers in intergroup relations and those in conflict resolution, and the need for establishing a stable, well-funded research base. In discussing improving intergroup relations, war metaphors were frequently used, which is appropriate because the meeting participants agreed that the country must fight against inequities that block full participation in American life. The conference agenda and a list of participants are attached. (SLD)

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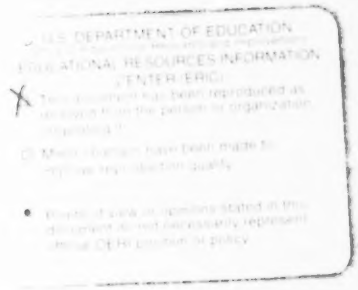
Carnegie Meeting Papers

ED 426 165

CARNEGIE CORPORATION'S YOUTH INTERGROUP RELATIONS INITIATIVE

By Sandee Brawarsky

Report of a Meeting Convened
By Carnegie Corporation of New York
October 15–17, 1997



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From time to time the Carnegie Corporation supports meetings on issues of importance that may or may not be closely related to its grant programs. Occasionally, reports of these meetings merit public dissemination.

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Foreword

A fundamental issue for our country is how to maintain and draw strength from the ways we are different from each other — culturally, ethnically, racially, by national origin — and yet to be joined meaningfully together as part of a common people, as one nation. How can we be different and yet reach across differences to go beyond tolerance to acceptance and understanding? In the meeting, reported in the following pages, Corporation-supported researchers on Youth Intergroup Relations recognized the importance of knowing *when* it is important to be separate, what the functional value is of being with one's own group, and when and under what conditions coming together across groups can be done in a way that leads to understanding, or, for that matter, constructive conflict.

Of course, all of these judgments require us to give shape to a definition of positive intergroup relations. While our group did not attempt to reach consensus on such a definition, it did appear to resonate with many of us that positive intergroup relations are not merely the absence of conflict. Rather, they involve transactions that are based on justice and equity. There can be no real positive intergroup relations if there is no real justice.

This suggests that positive intergroup relations are intimately tied to the structure of economic, social, and political opportunities available to different groups of people. As long as there are wide, and, in some cases, growing income disparities between groups — and for children and youth disparities in perceived opportunities for decent jobs and healthy, productive lives — there is a built-in impediment to justice, hence a built-in barrier to positive intergroup relations.

Obvious injustice acts as a barrier to positive intergroup relations by influencing kids' behavior and attitudes. Young people inform themselves about what society conceives to be "normal," taking note not only of how adults relate to each other on an interpersonal level, but also of how they structure and operate within different institutions and organizations. If it is normal for there to be obvious differences in power, privilege, and prestige by racial and ethnic group, then children will accept it as normal for these differences to be recreated in their own relationships across groups.

Central to the problems we discussed is the underlying, widely held belief that some children, most often children of color or of low income, simply do not have the ability to learn as well as children who are white or of middle- and upper-income families. There remains deeply embedded in the American psyche the idea that ability is inherited and more or less fixed. Differential treatment in schools and elsewhere is, therefore, warranted and differences in life outcomes are to be expected. This, to say the least, puts a real crimp in establishing an expectation of equity and justice as a foundation for positive intergroup relations.

Both adults and young people have difficulty talking candidly about racial and ethnic relations, but there is, nonetheless, a desire on the part of many adults and perhaps many, many young people, to talk about racial and ethnic relations. In that context, we noted that candid talk is a "good" unto itself; authentic talk is a necessary element of reconciliation and understanding. But that talk has to have depth. It cannot be superficial. Moreover, authentic talk between individuals from diverse backgrounds needs to be embedded in knowledge of one's own and others' history and culture. Otherwise, people are left to try to make connections with each other in a weightless environment.

Also needed are spaces where authentic talk is allowed and *enabled* to occur. The meeting participants began, at least, to struggle with the means by which these safe spaces can be created, both in the physical environment and in the media environment. I would also add, though, that the power and value of such spaces should be measured not only by their ability to promote constructive dialogue but by the extent to which they empower young people to act, to rectify the imbalances in status, the injustices, that kids perceive and feel and that are at the root of intergroup conflict. Kids and adults alike need the opportunity to move beyond talk.

The construction of identity is different now from what it was two or three generations ago. Currently a child may identify him- or herself using not only categories of race and ethnicity, but language and nation of origin. This, in effect, multiplies exponentially the borders that any one young person may need to find ways to breach. It can also, by the same token, multiply by the same factor the sources of enrichment of their experience and

knowledge.

Today, although there does not seem to be a great deal of overt hostility between youth groups in society, there is substantial voluntary segregation. In schools and in neighborhoods, kids establish turf. Though this is not a desirable end point, what they do in their self-defined spaces may be a necessary foundation-setting for reaching out across boundaries. But that next step from "turfism" to common ground does not come naturally; it needs to be facilitated. Moreover, that facilitation, that push to cross borders, needs to be expected of both white youth and youth of color. This new expectation must work in opposition to the historical expectations and understandings that it is alone the obligation of people of color, including children of color, to assimilate to the majority culture, whereas it is the right of white youth to hold their ground and accept visitors.

We all need help in shaping our vision of what lies beyond the establishment of turf and borders. In that context, I am reminded of something that Bishop Desmond Tutu said to us recently here at the Corporation. He said that in South Africa under apartheid it was easy to define what you were against, just as in this country, in times past and now, it is relatively easy to define our opposition to the laws limiting the opportunities of various segments of the population. But as South Africans struggle toward reconciliation and becoming a post-apartheid nation, they are finding it more difficult to define what, as a people, they are for. What does victory really look like? It is our hope that our dialogue and this report will serve as one step toward answering these questions in our own country.

Anthony W. Jackson
Program Officer
Carnegie Corporation of New York

Carnegie Corporation's Youth Intergroup Relations Initiative

Report of a Meeting of Researchers Held October 15–17, 1997

by Sandee Brawarsky

How can we best ensure a future of promise and potential, free of the stains of racial and ethnic prejudice, for all of our nation's young people? This challenge was the underlying theme of the second meeting of research project leaders awarded grants in Carnegie Corporation's $2.1 million initiative toward improving intergroup relations among children and youth. Held in New York City at the Corporation's offices October 15–17, 1997, the meeting was an opportunity for this distinguished group of researchers to share their preliminary findings and observations as well as questions and potential applications.

The Corporation's initiative, established in 1996 "to create a new generation of tolerance," included grants to sixteen institutions for cutting-edge research in various social science disciplines (see Appendix A). The Corporation's goal, in attending to this critical yet overlooked area, is to build a base of practical knowledge that will guide parents, educators, and community leaders through the 1990s and beyond in rethinking their approaches and making critical decisions about their schools. Simultaneously, the Corporation's aims are to catalyze additional scholarship, encourage the involvement of other funders, influence policy makers in government and the private sector, and ultimately bring about improvement in race and ethnic relations. In general, the number of research studies in the area of intergroup relations has declined considerably since the 1970s, yet the need for such study is probably greater than ever.

Forty years after the beginning of the civil rights movement, our nation remains divided along racial and ethnic lines. Still far from Martin Luther King's dream of an integrated nation, we are, in many ways, as journalist David K. Shipler's new book on race in America states, "a country of strangers."[1] Color prejudice persists, expressed in words and

actions ranging from subtle to violent. Although children are born blind to distinctions of race, they somehow come to think that race matters, influencing how they see the world and how the world sees them. Their experiences in public school for the most part confirm that. Yet there are signs of healing, and education has great potential for bridging the racial and ethnic divide.

"The highest result of education is tolerance," Helen Keller wrote. But, as Vartan Gregorian, president of Carnegie Corporation, told the assembled group in an opening session, "Tolerance is not enough. After tolerance must come understanding. After understanding must come acceptance. After acceptance must come the understanding of what makes us a nation."

That issues related to race are of critical importance in American today is underscored by the formation earlier this year of a presidential advisory board on the subject, President Clinton's Initiative on Race. Judith Winston, executive director, and Thomas H. Kean, a member of the advisory board and chairman of the Corporation's board of trustees, addressed the group and engaged in a conversation with the researchers, providing a public policy perspective to the meeting.

Although the discussion of the complex issues of diversity, prejudice, and intergroup and interpersonal relations focused on the American context, ethnocentrism is clearly a worldwide phenomenon. Many nations face the challenge of bringing together disparate groups and building educational models that help them to get along and flourish together. Several prominent scholars from other countries were invited to provide an international perspective and help to put the American experience into a global frame.

Carnegie Corporation has a long-standing interest and commitment to improve the academic achievement and healthy development of minority children. The research projects in the Corporation's Intergroup Relations Initiative are based at sites around the country, including several projects in states with increasingly diverse youth populations, such as California, Texas, Florida, and New York. Other sites are based in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Colorado. Most of the research is being carried out in school settings — whether in elementary, middle, or high schools — although their approaches, methods, and

organizing principles vary. While some projects evaluate the effects of existing programs and policies on attitudes and behavior, others introduce experimental interventions. Linking research with practice, all aim to figure out which strategies work to improve the climate for positive interaction.

As of mid-October 1997, the projects were in various stages of completion. Some have finished data collection and are beginning their analysis, while others are both more and less further along. All have the aim of finishing by June 1998. Although it is too early to make definitive statements based on the preliminary data, several areas of agreement are emerging, as well as many questions, methodological issues, opportunities for further exploration, and new ideas.

The project leaders first met as a group last year, December 12–13, 1996, in Washington D.C. Before this second meeting, each project leader submitted a report summing up progress to date and initial findings. These reports were circulated beforehand and became the basis for discussions. Plans are not yet finalized, but the expectation is that the project leaders will meet once more, when their data have been fully interpreted.

As Anthony W. Jackson, the meeting chair and Corporation's program officer managing the Intergroup Relations Initiative, noted, his hope was that the meeting would have the tone and spirit of a conversation — an engaging dialogue among equals — drawing on the knowledge and expertise of the group. This report covers the major themes of the meeting.

The New Diversity

The United States of the 1990s is a nation of nationalities. Any conversation about race has to be about much more than the divide between blacks and whites; there are more racial and ethnic categories than ever before, and the borders between them are far from neat.

Today's young people face many of the same dilemmas as did previous generations, but massive changes in American society associated with urbanization, immigration, and integration present them with new challenges. Their schools, communities — even their own families — are much more diverse than they were decades ago. Even the processes of

assimilation and acculturation are different. Whereas the immigrants of earlier generations sought to become Americanized as fast as they could, losing their accents and joining the mainstream, a new immigrant today might take a different path. For instance, a person from El Salvador may seek to maintain the lifestyle, values, and language of Latino culture, rather than adopt the (now) majority Anglo-American culture; for many first-generation immigrants, English remains a second language.

Eugene Garcia, dean of the Graduate School of Education at the University of California at Berkeley, one of the meeting participants, offered the term "new diversity" in describing the ever-increasing variety in students' backgrounds, based on race, social class, national origin, culture, and language. He suggested that what makes the present diversity "new" — most different from that of twenty years ago — is the role of national origin and language. In San Francisco, for example, whereas in a previous generation one spoke of Asians and Latinos, today there are Taiwanese Asians, Chinese mainland Asians, Vietnamese Asians, Japanese Asians, Korean Asians; among Latinos there are Mexicans, El Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and others. Each of these groups sees itself very differently from the others. Many students today, moreover, come from blended racial and ethnic backgrounds.

American cities have been transformed by this "new diversity." Citing California as an example, Garcia pointed out that Asians, African Americans, and Latinos are no longer the minority but are the majority. He expects that in the year 2010, this "minority majority" will predominate in California's high school graduating classes. Any efforts toward improving interaction between groups, as well as within groups (i.e. between established immigrants and newcomers, between young men and young women), must perforce, address this rich diversity, in all its complexity. Vartan Gregorian agreed, warning against the human tendency to see people as categories rather than individuals. "When we categorize people, we forget them," he said.

These multiple, multi-dimensional group differences need to be recognized and seen as sources of enrichment — for within all this diversity is a wealth of experience that is the wellspring of renewal and strength for the nation. It is essential that people attempt to know each other's history and culture and come to know the parts that constitute our diverse whole.

While we as a nation acknowledge and honor individuality and group allegiances, it is also important that we acknowledge and honor the things we all have in common. Although it sounds obvious, we do not often acknowledge that people are, at once, different and the same. Key questions to consider are, How can we maintain and draw strength from our differences, and at the same time, reach out to each other across the racial and ethnic barriers that divide us. How do we encourage individual pride in our separate identities and distinctive institutions — and also in those things that unite us?

A Conspiracy of Silence

At the first meeting of the project leaders in 1996, participants spoke of a "conspiracy of silence" surrounding issues of race. Many adults — whether parents, teachers, administrators, or community leaders — are reluctant to talk openly of race; they talk past each other, or they simply keep silent; in many settings, the subject is taboo. Sometimes talk degenerates quickly to shouting. It is much more difficult to have real conversations marked by honesty, depth of thinking, and genuine listening.

What is desperately needed are dialogues of understanding, based in knowledge of our own and others' backgrounds. But if adults are not engaged in these activities, how can they expect young people to learn the necessary skills? Where are models of authentic conversation for young people to witness and repeat in their own contexts?

Several researchers agreed that when race becomes an issue in classroom talk, many kids shut down, in much the same way that their parents do. One young man, quoted in a report of a grantee, Facing History and Ourselves, said that some people conflate the act of talking about race with being racist. A young woman quoted in the report described not talking about racism as an "unspoken uncomfortableness."

Although youths do model their behavior after the adults they observe and avoid talking about race, many will indeed talk freely of their attitudes and feeling — when given the opportunity and the psychologically safe space to do so. Unlike adults, young people often can look someone in the eye and say what they really mean. And they are more likely to talk about important issues when they believe that their perspectives are respected and

regarded as important — both by their peers and by adults, too; young people can teach adults a great deal. Their voices need to be heard in any serious dialogue on racial issues. Indeed, the meeting pointed out, the composition of discussion groups about intergroup relations should bear resemblance to those whose lives are being discussed.

Defining Intergroup Relations

Although there was agreement among the researchers and Corporation staff on the critical need for improved relations between (and among) various racial and ethnic groups, it was recognized that not all necessarily have the same goal in mind when speaking of positive intergroup relations. For some, "improved group relations" might signify a diminishment in hostility and violence, while for others it might mean full integration of schools and neighborhoods — social lives, too. But most agreed that the absence of conflict is not the same thing as positive relations. "No justice, no peace," is how participant Beverly Daniel Tatum, professor in the Department of Psychology at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, defines positive intergroup relations, looking toward relationships based in equality and justice. Several participants underscored the importance of grappling with issues of definition, for the answers to the question will determine how the studies and their results are viewed.

In looking at intergroup relations, behavior is much more important than rhetoric. It is not what people say that is important — it is what they do. It is not enough to profess a belief in values of kindness and compassion; one has to fully embrace and live them. This is true of young people, their parents, teachers, school officials, and community leaders.

In various stages, from the time they are in elementary school grades through their high school years, students carve out an understanding of their racial identity while they are also coming of age in other ways, with all the requisite difficulties and anxiety about what others will think of them. Often, profound racial awareness leads to the self-segregation of groups. All kinds of factors mediate their experiences in school: peer group relations, family outlook, neighborhood experience, cultural and social dynamics, language, class status. In Tatum's new book, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" And Other Conversations About Race*, she describes racial identity as "the meaning each of us has

constructed or is constructing about what it means to be a white person or a person of color in a race-conscious society." Based on her research, she noted that those who feel affirmed in their own identity are more likely to be respectful of others' self-definitions.

As several participants pointed out, however, race has no biological significance; it makes more sense to speak of race as a social construct. But even if studies show that race has no scientific basis, it remains a powerful force in American life; the United States in the 1990s remains a race-conscious society. A good deal of racial prejudice may be less overt than in previous times, but it is still damaging. Many racial encounters are marked by ambiguity, and it is difficult for participants on all sides, from varying backgrounds, to decode what are often complicated interactions.

One cannot talk about race without also talking about class differences. Attention to improved intergroup relations needs to be accompanied by significant attention to problems of chronic poverty and joblessness. For many people, these are the real issues. Additionally, it is essential to talk about issues of power. No person in this society should be made to feel like an unwelcome guest. All people should be inspired and encouraged to "border cross" — to reach out to others across the racial and ethnic divide. It is not solely the responsibility of the minority-group members.

A National Conversation about Race

"It's an extraordinary moment when the President of the United States says he wants to initiate a national conversation about race," Kean told the group, in introducing Judith Winston, executive director of the President's Initiative on Race. The advisory board is chaired by John Hope Franklin, professor emeritus at Duke University and author of the well-regarded *From Slavery to Freedom*, published in 1947. Kean explained that the role of this advisory board is different from that of the 1967 National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, President Johnson's blue-ribbon panel known as the Koerner Commission, which predicted that the country was "moving toward two societies, one black, one white — separate and unequal." The current mandate is to advise the President; the board is slated to work for one year.

Winston, an attorney who formerly worked in the U.S. Department of Education and heads a staff of twenty-four, outlined the broad goals of the Initiative:

1) To help shape and articulate a vision for one America — one America that celebrates its differences, and yet is united by a set of shared values.

2) To begin informing the American people of the facts of race, including demographic changes and the disparities that exist across racial and ethnic lines.

3) To engage the American people in a constructive conversation about race with the aim of bridging the racial divide.

4) To reach out and engage a committed leadership in this enterprise and to identify new leaders.

5) To develop solutions to the challenges identified.

In describing the mission of the President's Initiative on Race, Winston seemed also to be reflecting the aims of the Corporation's meeting: "The key for us is looking at how we are educating our young people to live in a democracy that is characterized by a high degree of diversity."

She noted that a successful discussion of race would have to be followed up by critical actions on three levels: individual, community, and institutional. The advisory board has been instructed to involve young people in its work, but it is not yet clear how it is going to do that.

Following her presentation, Winston asked the scholars and researchers to share their ideas, advice, and areas of concerns, which she would bring back to the advisory board. She was urged, among other things, to back up the Intergroup Relations Initiative's work with significant financial and other practical resources, take the Initiative into the community, and get the dialogue onto the public agenda. Additionally, she was encouraged to link the Initiative's work with policies geared to fighting poverty and creating jobs. Several meeting participants noted that, while they believe that the President's Initiative on Race is an extraordinary opportunity to raise issues of racism on a national level, there is, at the same

time, ambivalence toward the administration, because of its disappointing record in promoting equal opportunity and its treatment of the poor, who are disproportionately people of color.

In the Schools: Research Findings

For most young people who live in neighborhoods populated predominantly with people from backgrounds similar to theirs and who attend religious services with people like themselves, school is the primary place where they might encounter youths from different racial and ethnic backgrounds throughout the year. Therefore, school settings offer much potential as a locus for improving intergroup relations. For researchers, the schools can be fertile ground for observing intergroup dynamics and for staging attempts to increase tolerance and interaction.

To describe schools as complex institutions is an understatement, however: Within a single school, it is possible to have several different environments, where different kinds of student and teacher interactions occur. For example, a particular teacher's classroom might have a very different atmosphere from another's, and both may be different from the culture of the school playground.

As posited more than forty years ago in the contact hypothesis[2] — which underpins much of the research that has been done in the field — several factors are necessary for the improvement of intergroup relations through direct contact with people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds. The interaction must be on a level of equal status; it must be sanctioned by the institution and by authority figures; and members of the various groups must have the opportunity to interact as individuals. It is important that schools create these opportunities, which form the starting point for positive intergroup interaction.

Schools around the country are dealing with what Garcia referred to as "the new diversity." As Michele Foster of Claremont University Center and Graduate School in Claremont, California, who is directing a study of relationships in multicultural classrooms and schools in southern California, pointed out, there is a tendency in many middle-class and upper-middle-class schools to "do diversity" rather than to "live diversity." The former has an

inauthentic quality to it — it is not woven into the very fabric of the school. In those schools, parents and teachers might organize multicultural programs, like fairs, cultural workshops, and art projects, and the superintendent might send out frequent bulletins about multicultural issues. While they may be well-intentioned, expressing great enthusiasm about such efforts, their results are superficial. Foster found that, frequently, there were few people of color among the professional staff in these schools and that the idea of diversity had little to do with the running of the institutions.

In contrast, in working-class schools, Foster found that people simply "lived diversity" and multiculturalism was a natural phenomenon. Alex Stepick, director of the Immigration and Ethnicity Institute at Florida International University in Miami echoed Foster's findings when he said that multiculturalism and anti-racism "have suffused the educational institution completely. It is the accepted norm. However, it is not a norm that is very frequently met."

Foster found that in the early grades the children were more likely to have cross-ethnic connections; then as they grew older they chose peers and groups most like themselves, becoming increasingly estranged from their former friends. Interestingly, it was the girls who split off from each other first. The young boys in her study continued to relate together through activities like sports. Researchers who studied students in older grades concurred about the effectiveness of cooperative activities, like cultural projects and team athletics. They give students an opportunity to work together — even struggle together — as equals, with a mutual goal in mind, focusing on something not directly about race. In doing so, they naturally find common ground. Even on college campuses, the prime opportunities for an integrated life are in sports teams and the arts.

In addition to teamwork skills, students need instruction in other ways of interacting effectively. Hanh Cao Yu's study, conducted with her colleagues at Social Policy Research Associates in Menlo Park, in several California high schools pointed to the importance of leadership training. Teaching kids practical skills in communication, negotiation, collaboration, and conflict mediation promotes their leadership abilities and, consequently, their proficiency in handling conflicts arising from racial tensions. Students' attitudes and actions are also highly influenced by their peers, and the researchers' data suggest that peer

support is essential if students are to participate in intergroup activities. For many kids, their awareness of being excluded was a motivating factor in their sensitivity to others being excluded.

In another California study, Howard Pinderhughes, assistant professor in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of California, San Francisco, told of working with a group of students in one troubled high school in conducting research and in designing and implementing programs and curricula to reduce intergroup tensions in their own school. The students involved in the project selected a telling name for themselves: PROPS: People Respecting Other Peoples.

Along with teaching academic and social skills, schools also play an important role in communicating values. Research in this area was conducted in studies in Michigan and Pennsylvania by Constance A. Flanagan, associate professor of agriculture and extension education and of human development and family studies at Pennsylvania State University in State College, Pennsylvania. She is probing the relationship between adolescents' views of what constitutes a just world and their behavior toward different racial, ethnic, and immigrant groups. Sometimes there is confusion, even discord, between the two basic values that unite Americans: the spirit of rugged individualism, including competitiveness and emphasis on individual achievement, and the spirit of egalitarianism and humanitarianism. In asking students about justice in America, one preliminary result she obtained is that the African American kids are more likely than the kids from other groups in their study to say that "even when I work hard, even when my people get a good education, the payoff is simply not there."

Michelle Fine, professor of psychology at City University of New York, reported a disturbing observation she had made about the perceptions of high school students today. In a discussion of John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, many of the students were unsympathetic to Lenny, the mentally disabled character in the book. They saw him as "useless," his life of little value. For these students — part of the "generation that grew up with capital punishment, anti-immigration, and welfare reform" — the sense of "who deserves," Fine said, is so "tiny," so limited. It is as though their sense of being part of a moral community has

been almost entirely diminished.

In the programs facilitated by Facing History and Ourselves, a national project based in Brookline, Massachusetts, that trains educators to engage young people of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and anti-Semitism, students confront moral questions together. Emphasis is placed on self-reflection. In the process, the programs promote an awareness and tolerance of cultural differences.

Paul Goren, an official with the Minneapolis Public Schools, who serves as executive director of policy and strategic services, provided an urban context for the research agenda presented by the project leaders. In his presentation, he outlined efforts to reform the schools, challenge racism, and ultimately close the achievement gap between white and non-white students in Minneapolis, which has a large school system with an increasingly diverse population. A city with a growing economy, Minneapolis's population has recently shifted from monochromatic to multicultural, with large numbers of African Americans, Somalis, Ethiopians, and Hmong. The school population was 93 percent white in 1970; today, public school enrollment is "68 percent other than white."[3] With a budget of half-a-billion dollars, the school district encompasses 47,000 students, 100 schools (seventy-five elementary and middle, seven high schools), and 7,000 employees, 4,500 of whom are teachers. Most teachers are white, live outside of the city, and are in their last ten years of teaching.

Now the district is involved in an extensive program to recruit teachers of color. In their efforts to bring about systemic reform, officials have instituted content standards and performance standards and are trying to create a new assessment system that really reflects achievement. Through standardized tests of basic skills, educators have found a large gap between groups, with white students scoring higher than others. Their agenda is to create a range of policy initiatives to close the gap. In addition, their stated, related goal is "to challenge racism and its effects on the performance of Minneapolis public schools." They are working in cooperation with colleagues in the business and government sectors, dealing, in particular, with issues of housing, transportation, and economic development.

One of the district's efforts — in process — has been to establish an experimental

dialogue in six schools, with volunteers discussing and analyzing the achievement gap as well as issues of race and racism in their day-to-day lives as educators and as citizens. Although Goren feels that such efforts are extremely important, he believes they need to move from policy talk to action. Through Minnesota's compensatory education law, the district is about to have some new money (eight million dollars) available to its schools. The district leadership is supporting schools in finding programs and interventions to help them improve their students' performance. The challenge for the schools is to use those resources wisely and efficiently so that, as Goren stated, "we can ultimately improve the lives of kids and their performance."

The Question of Tracking

Although the U.S. public school system is based on the democratic ideal of equal access for all students, the system of tracking — assigning students to class levels based on test scores — most often results in segregated classrooms, with limited opportunities for intergroup interaction.

The system of tracking is pervasive in schools across America. Within a school it becomes the defining feature of the instructional program, affecting the level of instruction, type of curricular materials, classroom resources, and other opportunities available to kids because of scheduling. For students assigned to the lower tracks, the system can undermine motivation and achievement. Central to the idea of tracking and differential treatment is the widely held belief that some children lack the ability to learn as easily or as well as other children. Still embedded in the American psyche is the idea that ability is inherited, and that life outcomes can be predicted accordingly.

A spirited discussion of tracking followed the screening of a video prepared by Michelle Fine, focusing on her research project in a New Jersey high school. She followed a ninth-grade world literature class, which was an experiment for the school in detracking. The school is 55 percent African American and 45 percent white; one-third of the students' families fall below the poverty line. The world literature class has a mixture of young men and women, with different academic backgrounds, social class, race, religion, and ethnicity. Students who test at a third-grade reading level converse with others who read at much more

sophisticated levels. "This was about possibility; this was about doing a piece of serious work together," she said of the class, which is taught by two pioneering teachers, one white, one black.

Reporting on her study in "Communities of Difference: A Critical Look at Desegregated Spaces Created for and by Youth" in the *Harvard Educational Review*,[4] Fine wrote: "The more time I spend with these students and teachers, the more I realize that this course is truly a window into the educational dilemmas and rich possibilities that sparkle across the school district, across public education. It is also a privileged opportunity to witness the brilliance of teaching for intellectual excellence and social justice."

The video was praised by other meeting participants, not only as an example of thoughtful reporting, but as a potential tool for consciousness raising and a springboard for discussion. It follows the students in class discussion and also features candid interviews with them outside of class, where they reflect on their experience. These students have a lot to teach adults — their parents, teachers, school administrators, public officials. On camera they seem remarkably bright, articulate, and engaged in the class work, although Fine pointed out that some of these same students, when observed in other classes, seemed uninterested and inattentive. What made this class so different for them was the work of the teachers in creating an open setting, where they were given full license to speak about sensitive topics and to be heard by their peers and teachers. "While most are engaged in the talk, they're still learning to hear, to listen, and to imagine the value of another's point of view," Fine wrote. "This is the slow, not always progressive, move toward community, toward authentic education."

Studies comparing tracked versus untracked schools have not yielded any consistent support for the idea that tracking generally benefits students academically.[5] Among the researchers, there was general agreement that tracking has no proven educational value and that it is in fact a negative force in schools, in which low expectations yield low achievements. There is increasing evidence that untracking — placing students of various levels in one class — can benefit the slower learners without harming those thought to be faster learners. But tracking has many supporters, including parents who see their kids as benefiting from the

practice; some keep their children in public schools because of tracking and would probably send them to private schools if it did not exist. So it becomes an issue with political dimensions.

Gregorian pointed out that public schools have built tracking as a "defensive barrier against erosion of the public school system." He spoke of it as an endemic problem in the United States, where public institutions are widely perceived as "by definition mediocre and poor and nonperforming." Too often, public schools are places "where democracy and excellence are not considered mutually compatible." This is a late-twentieth-century assumption, contrary to that of the nineteenth century.

But solutions are not so simple. If schools were to eliminate tracking, what system of organization would they substitute to ensure that all students are given full opportunities? Getting rid of tracking itself is not enough. Schools need top-to-bottom improvement to assure that all youth are educated well. Unfortunately, schools are not yet staffed by teachers like those seen in the video, empowering all of their students to do their best.

The Role of Teachers

Good schools are made up of really good teachers, Garcia stated. Describing the results of earlier research that he conducted while in a previous position at the University of California at Santa Cruz, which looked at twenty-eight schools across the country with diverse populations, he said, "We found essentially some schools that had horrible principals, they had horrible policies, they had a horrible school board, but if you had a good teacher, guess what? Kids did pretty well."

As Gregorian pointed out, teachers are on the "front lines" — which are the most important lines. They have the potential to be great positive influences in the lives of students, and can profoundly influence the kind of intergroup interactions that prevail in the classroom. Conversely, teachers also have the potential to do harm; even those who are well-intentioned can do damage. Either way, teachers matter.

But most teachers have little experience in fostering positive intergroup relations.

Most have grown up in much less diverse settings than their students have, and they are likely to have had little exposure to multicultural situations. Furthermore, they have had little, if any, professional training that relates directly to the realities of their diverse classroom populations. They need to be part social worker, part psychologist, part group facilitator, part interpreter, and sometimes referee. They need to be bridge builders — but for the most part they are unprepared.

Sherryl Browne Graves, department chair and associate professor in the Department of Educational Foundations and Counseling Programs at Hunter College in New York City, is conducting evaluations of a prejudice-reduction video, "Different and the Same," with primary grade school children. She noted that many of the teachers involved were timid about using the video; they were anxious that the series would open up discussions they would not know how to control. Teachers need not just facts; they need skills in conflict management and sensitivity training. One white female high school teacher participating in Tatum's study — a three-part intervention at the middle school level in Northampton, Massachusetts, involving students, teachers, and parents — who took a course in anti-racist professional development, expressed her reactions: "Within the first two weeks of this course I began to realize how much I denied and withdrew from my responsibilities regarding racism. The most glaring mistake I have lived is that of embracing all my students without seeing their color. I used to be very proud that skin color didn't change my approach to my students and the intended curriculum in any way. I prided myself in my nonpartisan approach of equality for all. I realize how that this lack of acknowledgment left my students thinking I did not recognize their identity."

Teachers matter — and they need to be encouraged and supported on many levels. Several researchers called for a reconceptualization and overhaul of teacher education. It is important to link teachers with the latest findings in the research world. Phyllis Brown, director of the Cultural Identity Group at Mount Holyoke College who is working with Tatum, suggested that teachers be required to earn certification in race relations. Gregorian proposed that all teachers be provided substantial retraining, paid for by universities. Teachers need to be trained to better understand their students' backgrounds; they need to be

educated in how to teach all of their students well.

In schools all over the country, there are exceptional teachers who are boldly innovating, succeeding, and truly making a difference, as several of the researchers pointed out. Many teachers are managing to create safe spaces for students to have real dialogues. But sometimes such creative mavericks are alienated in the schools, their spirits choked. It is essential to acknowledge that teachers are under enormous pressures and need support.

School administrators, too, need to be proactive and anti-racist; they must learn to break through the institutional silence about race. They can empower good teachers, and they also can get rid of those teachers who are not positive influences. School principals and the superintendents they report to need to be mindful of the racial makeup of the professional staff of their schools, for students take away lessons about hierarchy from the school structure. Additionally, they should reach out and involve parents and other members of the community in promoting intergroup relations. Several researchers suggested that adults be held accountable for modeling the kinds of behavior that we would like to see our kids model — to see others as equals, to treat everyone with respect, to reach out across the divides and seek genuine understanding of differences. "Lift accountability north of the kids," Fine said.

School reform needs to be tied to changes in the community. All institutions should be encouraged to promote positive intergroup relations in their own interior operations and their community work. Fine quoted Jean Anyon: "To reform the inside of a school without transforming the community around it is like cleaning the air on one side of a screen."

The Influence of Parents

Like teachers, parents have great potential to positively influence their kids in learning tolerance and getting to know people different from themselves. In Hanh Cao Yu's study of three California schools, she found that students say that their parents, particularly their mothers, have the greatest influence — more so than their peers — on whom they choose as friends.

Young people learn by example, and sometimes they get mixed messages from their

parents about intergroup relations. Kids understand instinctively when adults say one thing and do another. Several researchers reported that sometimes young people want to interact with people different from themselves, but their parents get in the way. They suggested that young people need to be taught that their parents are not always right and that if their parents express prejudice or disrespect towards others, they do not need to agree with them nor follow their behavior.

Young people have expressed disappointment in the adult role models in their lives with respect to prejudice. A study by Ronald G. Slaby, senior scientist in health and human development at the Education Development Center, Inc., in Newton, Massachusetts, investigated the role that "bystanders" can play in reducing prejudiced behavior among middle school children in East Boston. Slaby emphasized a clear need for interventions targeted to the adult authority figures in children's lives. In an exercise that is part of their curriculum, participants discussed the concept of the quiet hero who has the inner strength to challenge attitudes and behaviors of prejudice. One student asked, "Do I have to think of my parents as heroes? Because they definitely are not."

Parents and other adults could learn some useful lessons about intergroup relations from their children. Constance A. Flanagan of Pennsylvania State University discusses her research results with the community, engaging youth and their parents in interpreting the findings, thereby promoting wider understanding of attitudes and their impact. In addition, she plans to use the results as an outreach tool to discuss intergroup relations in other communities not in the study.

Parents can also have a role in furthering the agenda of positive intergroup relations by lobbying school officials and policy makers on behalf of their children. In modeling positive intergroup relation skills at home and in public, parents can benefit their own children and the community.

Media as an Agent for Change

We live in an age of information explosion, with technological progress so rapid that it is hard to keep up. Beyond the spoken word, our prime means of receiving, processing, and

transmitting information is through the media, whether television, radio, newspapers, books, computers, or the Internet. All of these formats (with the exception of books) are quite different from what they were five or ten years ago, and continue to evolve. In agreement on the power and potential of the media, the researchers saw many opportunities to improve the media's representations of intergroup relations and related issues — and also possibilities for harnessing new media technologies to foster positive effects.

The negative side of the media, exacerbated by its power, is the tendency to simplify issues and sometimes distort them, amplifying stereotypes. There are few programs on commercial television where people of color can find role models. As one of the students in Fine's video commented, "Turn the television on. There's a white person on every channel." And one of the researchers wryly noted that one rarely sees a roomful of people of various backgrounds, like those attending the meeting, having a conversation on television. Television executives and programmers need to extend their range. Television does not have to be superficial — there are fine examples of programs of honesty and depth.

One of the great success stories of this century, in both the worlds of educational innovation and television programming, was the introduction of *Sesame Street*. There is a great need for additional thoughtful programming for all ages, where positive intergroup relations can be modeled. Ideally, television, and radio, too, can be resources in opening the national dialogue on race and ethnic relations. The nation would be well served by featuring more young people in programming, giving them an opportunity to talk openly in media in which they will be heard — by their peers and by adults.

The strong response to Fine's video supports the notion that the media, used wisely, can have great impact. Watching an example of successful untracking and hearing the students express their points of view brought the discussion of tracking to life in an altogether new and effective way. Suggestions were made that the video be used for teacher training and as a conversation piece for both young people and their parents.

The study by Alfred L. McAlister, with its public health approach to promoting tolerance and reducing prejudice in two Houston high schools, relied on a media component. McAlister, professor of behavioral sciences at the University of Texas, School of Public

Health, in Austin, used behavioral journalism, which involves making use of the media to report on positive developments, like stories of young people fostering nonviolence, thus affirming these actions in the eyes of viewers. His study confirms the impact of television, particularly for young people.

Henry Hampton, the award-winning film maker who is president and executive producer of Blackside, Inc., and his associate Robert Lavelle spoke to the group of researchers about working with them to take their findings to the mass media. Blackside, the multi-media production company responsible for *Eyes on The Prize,* is very interested in finding new ways to talk about race and ethnicity with a larger public and, in doing so, explore the very serious issue of what it means to be an American. One of their specialties is creating event television — programming that goes beyond what is prepared for the screen, including post-broadcast discussions and curricular materials.

Several people commented on the strength of *Eyes on the Prize,* an exceptional piece of work that has both professional and personal meaning. In a class she teaches on the psychology or racism, Tatum shows the first episode as an introduction that is useful for students of all backgrounds; she finds that watching the film as a group helps to "put everyone on the same page." And Stan Bowie of Florida International University said that he also uses the film in his classes. Furthermore, he frequently watches the video at home as an antidote to discouragement in the face of racial tensions — and it has an uplifting quality.

An International Perspective

David A. Hamburg, former president of Carnegie Corporation and cochair with former Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, presented his work on preventing ethnic violence internationally, emphasizing preventive diplomacy. His viewpoint, as well as the work of the four guest scholars from abroad — Germany, Holland, Israel, and South Africa — make clear that xenophobia is a global phenomenon, causing conflicts on many levels

The historical record is full of examples of wars and slaughter based on invidious distinctions related to race, religion, nationality, and other characteristics, Hamburg pointed

out. Part of the human legacy is this capacity to draw harsh distinctions that can lead to and justify violence. But today, with the destructive power of our weaponry — nuclear, chemical, biological — the stakes are higher than ever. "We humans as a species do not have much longer the luxury to indulge our prejudices and ethnocentricisms. They are anachronisms of our destructive past," he stated. Addressing these human tendencies is a particular challenge to educators on the front lines as well as those who study education and teach teachers.

Hamburg noted that, while the Commission's work focuses on preventing deadly conflict among and within nations, it above all about "decent human relations and human groups learning to live together."

On a different level, the project leaders from the United States and the scholars from abroad are involved in the same effort — and, again, the stakes are very high. As the four foreign panelists described, issues of diversity and intergroup relations are prominent in Germany, Holland, Israel, and South Africa; prejudice is a reality everywhere. Each country's particular situation is unique, however, whether it is dealing with assimilating new immigrants and refugees or reconciling various groups within the nation. Three of the countries are also dealing with their own powerful historical legacies — for Germany, the Nazi era; for Israel, its still-recent birth as a nation, in-gathering exiles from eastern and western lands; for South Africa, the end of apartheid — which resonate in daily life and affect the very meaning of citizenship. In Germany and Holland, large numbers of guest workers, immigrants, and refugees have altered the previously homogenous nature of those nations. Whether those nations will become "melting pots" is yet to be determined. In all of the countries, as in the United States, changing demographics and economic trends also influence group interactions in schools and outside of them, too.

The international studies reported on at the meeting confirmed the important influence of teachers on their students and the potential benefits of cooperative projects, leading to tolerance. As in the United States, positive attitudes generated in classrooms can be generalized to the outside world.

Wilmot James spoke for all assembled when he commented, "Time cannot be wasted on today's children, for they are tomorrow's leaders."

Toward A New Agenda

In her address to the group, Margery F. Baker, president of the National Institute for Dispute Resolution, spoke of the possibility of integrative work between the fields of intergroup relations and conflict resolution, which she describes as "a spectrum of processes that utilize communication skills and creative and analytic thinking to prevent, manage, and peacefully resolve conflict." Although conflict is often thought of as a taboo subject, to be avoided, she sees it as something natural. "It's how we handle conflict that becomes the issue," she says. Combining the work of these two fields might shed light on how to solve problems constructively across the great divide of race and ethnicity. Another link between the two fields would be to provide educators already in the schools that are doing conflict-resolution work with anti-racist curricular materials.

Several researchers emphasized the need for the establishment of a stable base of funding for the kind of cutting-edge work they are doing. The current projects, while providing important information, also inspire additional questions, pointing out the need for much additional research and evaluative work. The group, spanning many fields, expressed a desire to continue meeting and sharing their ongoing work. In their involvement with each other, they would like to demonstrate "positive group relations," cooperating and collaborating across disciplines, building up a knowledge base.

There are indications of broad national interest — among educators, other researchers, youth service providers, the media, policy analysts, government officials and others — in the research findings and the lessons derived from them. When the studies are complete and findings are ready to be released, wide and effective dissemination is necessary.

After launching this initiative and serving, in Gregorian's words, "as an incubator of ideas," it is Carnegie Corporation's aim to stimulate interest in additional research in this area among potential funders. Gregorian would like to bring together a coalition of foundations to work together on issues of strengthening democracy, school reform, and race relations, among other important issues. He also urged the researchers to seek other sources of support on their own. According to Gregorian, the nation's universities have a responsibility to shoulder some

of the costs of this research.

Conclusion

In discussing improving intergroup relations, war metaphors were frequently used — the battle line, teachers as warriors and frontline fighters, breaking down borders. Perhaps those terms are used because of the critical nature of the meeting theme: It is a fight against inequities that block full participation in American life.

There are causes for hopefulness: the establishment of the presidential commission; talented teachers making a difference; moments of reconciliation. One African American participant described the "revolution" she has witnessed in her lifetime in intergroup relations, from a childhood in the segregated South to a professional career in Washington D.C. But there is still much to be done. Not only do we have to create safe spaces for our kids to interact , but we need to make certain that there is space on the policy agenda for serious consideration and action on these issues.

"When you remove our skins, we have the same blood flowing in our veins. Second, we all imagine, we all dream, we all agonize, we all suffer, and we all love the same way as human beings. So our divisions are natural, but what unites us is more important," Gregorian stated. In schools, in family settings, in the workplace, in all levels of government, we need to affirm the unity in our diversity and what makes us a single people.

Notes

[1] David K. Shipler, *A Country of Strangers: Blacks and Whites in America* (New York, Knopf, 1997).

[2] G.W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954) cited in Jomills Henry Braddock II, Marvin P. Dawkins, and George Wilson, "Intercultural Contact and Race Relations Among American Youth," eds. Willis D. Hawley and Anthony W. Jackson, *Toward A Common Destiny: Improving Race and Ethnic Relations in America* (San Francisco:

Jossey-Bass, 1995), p. 241.

[3] Dirk Johnson, "Ethnic Change Tests Mettle of Minneapolis Liberalism," *The New York Times*, October 19, 1997, p. 1.

[4] Michelle Fine, Lois Weis, and Linda C. Powell, "Communities of Difference: A Critical Look at Desegregated Spaces Created for and by Youth," *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 67, No. 2, Summer 1997, p. 270.

[5] Janet Ward Schofield, "Promoting Positive Intergroup Relations in School Settings," eds. Hawley and Jackson, *Toward A Common Destiny*, p. 267.

CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK

RESEARCH TO IMPROVE INTERGROUP RELATIONS AMONG YOUTH
SECOND PROJECT LEADERS MEETING

Carnegie Corporation
437 Madison Avenue
New York, New York

October 15-17, 1997

AGENDA

Wednesday, October 15, 1997

1:00 - 1:15	**Opening Session** Anthony Jackson, Carnegie Corporation of New York
1:15 - 2:45	**Discussion of Preliminary Findings** Influences on current patterns of contact and relationships among diverse youth
2:45 - 3:00	**Break**
3:00 - 3:15	**Welcome** Vartan Gregorian, Carnegie Corporation of New York
3:00 - 5:00	**President's Initiative on Race** Thomas Kean, Drew University Judith Winston, President's Initiative on Race
6:30 - 8:00	**Dinner** New York Palace Hotel - *Kennedy I*

Thursday, October 16, 1997

8:00 - 8:30	**Continental Breakfast**
8:30 - 10:30	**Discussion of Preliminary Findings** Evaluation of interventions created in specific contexts
10:30 - 11:00	**Break**
11:00 - 12:30	**Discussion of Preliminary Findings** Evaluation of programmatic interventions

12:30 - 1:30	**Lunch**
1:30 - 3:15	**Current and Potential Applications of Research Knowledge** Paul Goren, Minneapolis Public School District Eugene Garcia, University of California, Berkeley Kenji Hakuta, Stanford University
3:15 - 3:30	**Break**
3:30 - 5:00	**Current and Potential Applications of Research Knowledge** Henry Hampton, Blackside Productions, Boston, MA Margery Baker, National Institute for Dispute Resolution
6:00 - 7:30	**Reception and Dinner** New York Palace Hotel - *Adams and Kennedy I*
7:30 - 8:30	**On Preventing Ethnic Violence** Vartan Gregorian, Carnegie Corporation of New York David Hamburg, Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict
Friday, October 17	
8:30 - 9:00	**Continental Breakfast**
9:00 - 11:00	**International Perspectives on Youth Intergroup Relations** Wilmot James, Institute for Democracy in South Africa Klaus Boehnke, University of Technology Chemnitz-Zwickau, Chemnitz, Germany Jan Pieter van Oudenhoven, Groningen University, Netherlands Shlomo Sharan, Tel-Aviv University, Israel
11:00 - 12:00	**Emerging Themes and Implications for the Future**
12:00	**Adjourn**

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